

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 SAM-01 EB-07 FEA-01 COME-00 TRSE-00

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R 210930Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1368

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMCONSUL MANDALAY

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

DEA BANGKOK UNN

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK UNN

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI UNN

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU UNN

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI UNN

USLO PEKING UNN

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE UNN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 RANGOON 1302

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PFOR BM

SUBJ: JOINT WEEKA #15

1. VISIT OF MONGOLIAN FOREIGN MINISTER (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

MONGOLIAN FOREIGN MINISTER LODONGYN RINCHIN VISITED RANGOON APRIL 10-13, CALLING ON COUNCIL OF STATE SECRETARY GENERAL SAN YU AS WELL AS FOREIGN MINISTER HLA PHONE. AS LAST DAYS OF VISIT COINCIDED WITH WATER FESTIVAL, PRESS SHOWED HIM GETTING A HEALTHY DOUSING WITH BUCKETS OF WATER BY HIS HOSTS, A GESTURE WHICH MAY OR MAY NOT LEAD TO CLOSER BURMESE/MONGOLIAN TIES. COMMENT: ACCORDING TO MFA SOURCE, VISIT LARGELY FOR GOODWILL AND MAY REPRESENT EFFORT
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BY MONGOLIA TO OPEN SOMEWHAT ITS CONTACTS WITH OUTSIDE WORLD.

SOURCE NOTES THAT THERE ARE NO TRADE OR OTHER TIES OF SIGNIFICANT MUTUAL INTEREST BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

2. SOVIET PARTY YOUTH DELEGATION (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

PRESS HAS GIVEN FAIR AMOUNT OF PLAY TO VISIT OF THREE-MAN SOVIET YOUTH DELEGATION HEADED BY FIRST SECRETARY OF THE YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE OF UZBEK, ERGASH GAFURZHANOV WHICH ARRIVED RANGOON APRIL 17. GROUP CALLED ON VARIOUS BSPP AND PARTY YOUTH OFFICIALS, WAS RATHER WIDELY ENTERTAINED AND TAKEN FOR A VISIT TO SANDOWAY. COMMENT: VISIT POINTS ONCE MORE TO SOVIET/BURMESE PARTY RELATIONSHIP AND CONTRASTS TO PRC REJECTION OF SIMILAR TIES WITH THE BSPP.

3. GUB DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER DEPARTS FOR INDONESIA, AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND (UNCLASSIFIED)

GUB DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR PLANNING AND FINANCES U LWIN DEPARTED APRIL 20 TO ATTEND ANNUAL ADB BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING AT JAKARTA. FOLLOWING THIS MEETING, U LWIN PLANS TO VISIT AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND ON "GOODWILL" MISSION PRESUMABLY TO DISCUSS BILATERAL AID AND CONSULTATIVE GROUP PROPOSALS.

4. MORE ON BATTLES WITH BCP (UNCLASSIFIED)

EDITORIAL IN WORKING PEOPLE'S DAILY APRIL 19 COMMENTING ON RECENT BATTLES BETWEEN BURMA ARMY AND BCP AGAIN CLAIMED SIGNIFICANT SUCCESS AGAINST BCP IN MARCH BATTLES (RANGOON 1239), NOTING CAPTURE OF 2,000 BASKETS OF PADDY AND CLOTHING STORES. EDITORIAL SAID THAT BSPP ORGANIZATION IN RECENTLY RECAPTURED AREAS WEAK AND CALLED FOR RAPID BUILD-UP IN ORDER TO MAKE BCP RESURGENCE MORE DIFFICULT.

5. NEW VCS ARMY (CONFIDENTIAL)

ALTHOUGH NO OFFICIAL PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT HAS BEEN MADE, COLONEL AYE KO, FORMERLY COMMANDER, RANVMON COMMAND, HAS ASSUMED HIS DUTIES AS NEW VICE CHIEF OF STAFF, ARMY, REPLACING MAJOR GENERAL KYAW HTIN, NOW CHIEF OF STAFF AND MINISTER OF DEFENSE. SOME FURTHER CHANGES IN COMMAND COMMANDERS CAN BE EXPECTED SOON, PER FOLLOWING PRESIDENT NE WIN'S RETURN TO BURMA.

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6. DEFENSE SERVICE ACADEMY GRADUATION (UNCLASSIFIED)

THE MILITARY ATTACHE CORPS ATTENDED THE GRADUATION EXERCISES OF THE 17TH CLASS OF THE DEFENSE SERVICE ACADEMY, MAYMYO, ON 9010 APRIL AS GUESTS OF THE DEFENSE SERVICES. 115 CADETS WERE COMMISSIONED; 91 IN THE ARMY, 15 IN THE AIR FORCE AND 9 IN THE NAVY. COMMENT: BURMA'S DEFENSE SERVICES ACADEMY, AS WITH OUR OWN, FOLLOW A CURRICULUM LEADING TO BACHELORS OF SCIENCE; PREDOMINATELY,

OR ARTS.

7. GENERAL SAN YU VISITS ARAKAN (CONFIDENTIAL)

VISITING ARAKAN STATE APRIL 7-8, GENERAL SAN YU MADE A SPEECH WHICH WAS NOTABLE OF ITS REFERENCES TO COMMUNAL AND RELIGIOUS TENSION IN THE AREA. GENERAL SAN YU DEPLORED RELIGIOUS CONFLICT, AN APPARENT REFERENCE TO DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MUSLIMS (LARGELY INDIAN) AND BUDDHISTS (LARGELY BURMESE) WHICH ALLEGEDLY CAUSED RELIGIOUS RIOT IN KYAUKPHYU IN FEBRUARY. GENERAL SAN YU ALSO SAID THAT MISCONDUCT OF BAD TATMADAW (ARMED FORCES) MEMBER SHOULD NOT BE BLAMED ON ENTIRE TATMADAW, AN APPARENT REFERENCE TO RIOT AT AKYAB A FEW MONTHS AGO INVOLVING ETHNIC BURMESE NAVAL RATINGS AND ARAKANESE CITIZENRY; RIOT APPARENTLY SPARKED BY LONG STANDING COMMUNAL TENSION BETWEEN ARAKANESE AND ETHNIC BURMESE. HOWARTH

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8. HEAVY SCHEDULE FOR F-28 (UNCLASSIFIED)

BURMA AIRWAYS CORPORATION INAUGURATED F-28 SERVICE IN BURMA ON APRIL 19 WITH MORNING FLIGHT FROM RANGOON TO MANDALAY AND MYITKYINA AND AFTERNOON FLIGHTS TO AKYAB, TAVOY AND MOULMEIN. EFFECTIVE APRIL 21 F-28 SERVICE WILL BEGIN ON RANGOON-SINGAPORE ROUTE ON MONDAYS AND THURSDAYS; RANGOON-BANGKOK ON WEDNESDAYS, FRIDAYS AND SUNDAYS; RANGOON-CALCUTTA-KATHMANDU ON SATURDAYS. FULL INTERNAL SCHEDULE FOR F-28 NOT YET ANNOUNCED, BUT DURING THOSE TIMES IT IS NOT ON EXTERNAL RUNS, PLANE WILL SERVICE POINTS VISITED ON INAUGURAL FLIGHT. UBA WILL UTILIZE 727 ON RANGOON-BANGKOK FLIGHT ON THOSE DAYS THAT F-28 DOES NOT SERVE BANGKOK, THUS RESTORING UBA'S DAILY SERVICE BETWEEN RANGOON AND BANGKOK
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(WEEKA #14, ITEM 6). COMMENT: PLANE AND CREW WILL HAVE TIGHT, HEAVY SCHEDULE TO MAINTAIN AND DOUBTFUL THAT THIS NEW ADDITION TO UBA FLEET CAN CONTINUE TO COMPLY WITH SUCH AN ONEROUS WORKLOAD FOR ANY LENGTH OF TIME. SINGAPORE FLIGHT WILL INITIALLY FERRY OIL COMPANY PERSONNEL BETWEEN RANGOON AND SINGAPORE, BUT UBA INTENDS TO MAKE THIS REGULAR PASSENGER RUN IN NEAR FUTURE. THIS SEEMS VERY POOR TIME TO BEGIN SUCH FERRY SERVICE AS MOST OIL DRILLING OPERATIONS ALREADY CLOSED DOWN FOR DURATION OF MONSOON OR LONGER.

9. GUB ISSUES NEW 100 KYAT NOTE (UNCLASSIFIED)

UNION OF BURMA BANK PUT NEW 100 KYAT NOTE INTO CIRCULATION ON APRIL 16. IT ALSO ISSUED NEW ONE KYAT COIN ON SAME DAY. ALL OLD CURRENCY IN CIRCULATION REMAINS LEGAL TENDER.

10. OIL DEVELOPMENTS (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

TOTAL CONTINUES WORK ON ITS PRESENT WELL, HAVING REACHED 8,000 FOOT LEVEL WITHOUT RESULT. DOMESTICALLY, SEVERE OIL SHORTAGE CONTINUES, DUE TO WEAKNESS IN TRANSPORTATION AND DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM. APPARENTLY AS RESULT OF POPULAR COMPLAINT, LOCAL PRESS RECENTLY CARRIED MAJOR STORY CLAIMING MANN FIELD HAD REACHED 16,000 BARRELS/DAY, WHICH WAS NO DOUBT TRUE BRIEFLY, BUT AS NEW PUSH TUGS AND BARGES HAVE NOT YET ARRIVED (SOME SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE THIS MONTH) THIS CRUDE CANNOT BE TRANSPORTED AND OIL SHORTAGES WILL CONTINUE IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE.

11. NARCOTICS: HELICOPTERS ARRIVE (UNCLASSIFIED)

THE NINTH AND TENTH BELL 205 HELICOPTERS SUPPLIED THE GUB FOR NARCOTICS CONTROL ARRIVED RANGOON BY AIR APRIL 16. AIRCRAFT APPEARED TO BE IN EXCELLENT CONDITION.

12. THINGYAN (UNCLASSIFIED)

THINGYAN (WATER FESTIVAL) WENT OFF WELL THIS YEAR, WITH LESS ROWDYISM THAN IN PAST. ONLY PROBLEM WAS PERSISTENT POWER OUTAGES IN RANGOON. FULL CROP OF RUMORS IMMEDIATELY SPRANG UP, OF WHICH MOST POPULAR WAS THAT INSURGENTS HAD BLOWN UP TRANSMISSION TOWER SOMEWHERE UPCOUNTRY, AS THEY HAVE IN PAST ON FESTIVE OCCASIONS TO MAKE THEIR STRENGTH FELT.
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